

Intimate Information From the Realm of Make-Believe

"Spirit of the Ages" Discusses Prohibition; Also David Belasco

By Harriette Underhill

The Spirit of the Ages had ordered tea for herself, although she insisted on our having chocolate. "It's good for one," she said.

"Then why isn't it good for two?" we asked.

"Patching," she answered, with finality. The Spirit of the Ages tasted her tea and added another lump. It's funny how prohibition makes you want a thing! It wasn't until they began to serve one lump of sugar that I wanted more.

"Yes, and I'm sure no one ever thought of wanting a cocktail if one didn't have it," she said.

"You're a humorist, aren't you?" retorted the Spirit of the Ages.

If you haven't seen "The Gold Diggers" you may not know that the Spirit of the Ages is Jobyna Howland. She complains bitterly because she is so tall that she never is cast for anything but the League of Nations or the Statue of Liberty. She is rehearsing her new part for "Sweetie" and, seizing a large vase, she walks down stage with it held aloft, announcing:

"I am the Spirit of the Ages. I got another line now, Sweetie, but I forgot it."

When we arrived, not more than two minutes late for our appointment with Miss Howland, we found the Spirit of the Ages pacing up and down in front of Henri's.

"I always exercise while I'm waiting," she said, but it seemed to us that if we worked in front of the camera in the daytime and on the stage at night we shouldn't mind sitting down and waiting for people who were late to tea with us and might even hope that they would be late.

Miss Howland always has fascinated us. Her vigor, her good looks and her humor are most attractive, and although we had known her only five minutes we wanted to say "Where were you born and how old are you, and how long have you been on the stage and are you married and have you always played comedy and isn't it fascinating and is that color all your own and what is your favorite fur and are you extravagant and do you believe in reincarnation and where did you get that silver cross and chain that looks like the one Hamlet wears when he soliloquizes?"

Intending, diplomatically, to lead up to the first question we started with the last. The Spirit of the Ages was made in the thirteenth century.

"The Spirit of the Ages!" we breathed in awestruck tones.

"It was given to me by a young Russian when I visited Russia while my brother, Olin, was dancing there. 'If you don't care to wear it, give it to a museum,' he said, and just after that he was killed in the war. When I returned to America I took it to a connoisseur and he told me all about it. Of course, I shouldn't be wearing it around. It ought to be in a museum."

"What does it do?" we asked, fingering the cross and chain and trying to picture some of the people who might have worn it.

"I haven't any idea," she answered. "It's the ancient order of the Bolshevik or something. They probably were rampant in the thirteenth century."

Although we tried to get Miss Howland to talk about herself, she absolutely refused, and it wasn't until she was driving us back to the hotel that we managed to elicit a few facts concerning her past.

She insisted on talking about Mr. Belasco and how marvelous he is, and you were quite sure that she meant every word she said. Miss Howland is the sort who would say "Dive is a brute, and I hate him," if she did.

"People wonder why Mr. Belasco keeps his people year after year and why he has such absolute loyalty from all of his subjects. Well, they wouldn't wonder if ever they had worked for him. I never have seen such consideration. While we are rehearsing all of our songs and trying to do a sandwich and a cup of coffee, but real food that makes you feel like working."

"And a thing that nobody knows is that our props are reserved for us at the first rehearsal. You know, as a rule, you never have any idea what sort of a room you're going to be in or what kind of a chair you're going to sit on until the dress rehearsal. Then you have one performance to get used to it. But when we start to rehearse everything is there that we are going to use, so you feel when the curtain goes up that awful first night that at least you are in your own home, and you know every rug and chair and prop, and everything is genuine. That is what they are always talking about as Belasco realism. It is real."

"At the first rehearsal, when we came to the scene where Mabel has to gather



Jobyna Howland

every day. After a show opens he goes to something else and we never see him again."

"I suppose being with Belasco is an education in itself, isn't it?"

"That is what I thought it would be, but he just lets you go on and rehearse and never says a word. Finally I went to him and said, 'Why don't you correct me for something?' Because he answered, 'I let people do their own work when it is the right way. Can you imagine anything so perfect in this world, where nothing perfect is?'"

Having indulged David Belasco's perfection, our mind reverted to our original questions.

"Where were you born?" we asked.

"In Denver; everybody is."

"Now, we know some one very well who was born in Cohoes, but we didn't correct Miss Howland."

"And what did you do first?"

"I played with Hackett in 'Rupert of Hentzau.' In those days I was always cast for grand ladies, and though I always fought for comedy, they would not let me do it. It wasn't until I did 'A Little Journey' that I really convinced people I was funny."

"Funny! I should think you were funny—almost as funny as you are in 'The Gold Diggers.' After this they surely won't try to make you a lady."

"No, I guess now they see it is no use. I never was cut out for a lady. 'Never mind,' we said encouragingly. 'Remember, you were once a lady, and think what you are now! You are the Spirit of the Ages.'"

Sol Lesser to Enter The Producing Field

Sol Lesser is the latest to enter the producing field. Mr. Lesser has been known as the biggest motion picture state rights operator in the country. A wire has been received from Los Angeles to the effect that Mr. Lesser will finance producers in the production of special features, which he will distribute through his own exchanges throughout the country. Production will be started immediately.

Rose Coghlan's Life One of Many And Varied Parts

Rose Coghlan, who has a prominent rôle in "The Whirlwind," John Cort's new production at the Standard Theater, made her first entrance through a stage door at a performance at the Old Haymarket Theater in London, where her brother Charles was playing in one of John Buckstone's extravaganzas. Miss Coghlan's brother, by the way, owed the beginning of his stage career to the influence of Charles Reade, John Oxenford and Bulwer Lytton, who, seeing evidence of genius in a play written by the young man—"Love and Hate, or the Career of Charles First"—persuaded Coghlan the elder to allow his son to enter on a stage career.

Rose Coghlan had her first glimpse of a theatrical performance when she went to see her brother dance with the old-fashioned "hobby-horse" in the extravaganza at the Haymarket. "All that night," says the actress, "I dreamed of fairy knights and jewels, and awoke with the determination to become an actress."

From that time on Miss Coghlan's great love of the theater developed steadily, and as a young girl she took advantage of every opportunity to see at home. Says the veteran actress, in the history of her life recently published, "I became such a nuisance to my brother Charles that he surprised me all one day by saying to my mother: 'It's all right! If she feels she must be an actress we had better try to prepare her.'"

Accordingly the actor-brother arranged dancing lessons for his ambitious sister, and for a year she studied dancing and stage deportment. Then when Charles Coghlan was ready to produce his second play, "Chances," he begged him to let her present a Spanish dance as an entr'acte and he agreed. Accordingly the actress's real stage debut was as a Spanish dancer.

In September, 1865, Rose Coghlan trod the boards for the first time as a professional. She played one of the witches in a performance of "Macbeth" at the Greenock Theater, Greenock, Scotland.

Miss Coghlan played for an entire season with Henry Irving. Later she was engaged to play the rôle of Nerissa in "The Merchant of Venice" in the production by Charles Calvert, father of Louis Calvert. Her next engagement was for a rôle in Wilkie Collins's "The Woman in White," and Miss Coghlan came to America to make her debut in this play. After the actress landed in New York, however, it was decided to produce "The Woman in White," and she was forced to look for another engagement.

A place in Lydia Thompson's burlesque company was offered her—but her prejudice against that form of entertainment was firmly rooted and of long standing. Accordingly a compromise was effected—Miss Coghlan promised to play Jupiter in "Ixion" if she might be permitted to appear in a short comedy before the curtain rose on the burlesque.

At the fall of the curtain on her opening night, she was summoned to the office of Lester Wallack, who offered her an engagement with E. A. Sothern in "Lord Dunsinore." Her success in that piece was country wide, but soon she was sent to England to play at the Gaiety Theater.

The following year she received another offer from Lester Wallack to come to America, and for several seasons she was seen in the same company with John Gilbert, John Brougham, Harry Becket, Harry Montague and Stella Boniface. Among her earliest successes in the country were "The Diplomacy," "Peggy MacNeil," "Marriage," "False Shame," "Steele Mackaye's 'Won at Last,'" Robertson's "School" and Sheridan's "School for Scandal." The rôle which she most enjoyed, says Miss Coghlan, was that of Portia in Sardou's "Scrap of Paper."

At that time Charles Coghlan was engaged as leading man in the Wallack company, and he was the same company in the arrangement of brother and sister making love on the stage would not prove popular with the public. Rose accepted the leading position in the Baldwin theater company of San Francisco. Her first appearance there was with James O'Neill in "School for Scandal."

When I met the company at rehearsal, I saw Miss Coghlan, who was surprised to find a very young man in the position of stage manager. He was David Belasco.

Once out of New York, however, Miss Coghlan longed to return to Broadway, and the following year she appeared in New York with John Clayton in Dion Boucicault's "Rescued." She later rejoined the Wallack company, playing Rosalind in "As You Like It."

Miss Coghlan's recent American performances are too well known to recount here. She was last seen in New York in "The Man Who Stayed Home."

At the Strand in Brooklyn, Norma Talmadge will be seen in "A Daughter of Two Worlds," a picture adapted from Percy Scott's novel by Edmund Goulding.

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New Films in New York Houses

"The Tree of Knowledge" will be the feature film at the Rialto this week. Theodore Kosloff, the Russian dancer, and Yvonne Gardelle appear in the prologue in a symbolic dance. Robert Warwick is the star of the picture, and supporting him are Kathryn Williams, Wanda Hawley, Tom Forman, Winter Hall and Irving Cummings. Margaret Turnbull made the scenario. The comedy is a Lehrman production entitled "Twilight Baby," with Will Rogers, Ben Ames Williams. Added feature, "The Log of the U-35," official German U-boat pictures. Friday and Saturday D. W. Griffith's "Scarlet Days," with Richard Barthelmess, by S. E. V. Taylor; also "The Fireman," with Charlie Chaplin.

Enid Bennett, in "The Woman in the Suitscase," will be the feature of the bill at the Rialto. The story is by C. Gardner Sullivan. Fred Niblo was the director, and the star is supported by William Conklin, Clair McDaniel and others. An Arbuckle comedy, "The Garage," is also on the bill. The Rialto orchestra will play Massenet's "Phédre" overture, Frederick Stalberg conducting. Greet Evans, baritone, will sing "Calling Me Home to You."

Nazimova in "Stronger Than Death" will be the feature picture at the Capitol Theater. It is a screen adaptation of I. A. R. Wylie's novel and Nazimova appears as a Parisian dancer. Ned Wayburn's revue will remain intact.

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Music for Movies Must Not Obscure The Picture Play

There are some musicians who feel that their results are not what they want them to be when the audience in a moving picture house is more keenly alive to the orchestral accompaniment than to the story being unfolded on the screen. This is the attitude of Edward Paley, Frederick Stalberg, Lion Vandenberg, Victor Wagner, Hugo Riesenfeld and Emanuel Baer, who collaborate on the music provided at the Rialto and Rialto theaters.

"There are millions of ways of selecting music for a picture, and there are only two ways that a good musician would choose," says Mr. Riesenfeld on this subject. "One is to select beautiful music that is appropriate for the scenes of the picture—and music for sad scenes, sprightly music for sprightly scenes, and so on. The good musician, inexperienced in motion picture presentation, would undoubtedly follow this first course."

"The second course, and the one that requires the hardest work, is to select music much as is chosen in the first mentioned way, but with an ear to the subjugation. There may be hundreds of waltzes that would fit prettily with certain scenes, but the experienced scorer of motion pictures will, after listening to the piece, know whether it is too striking or even too beautiful for the scene. He will take care that the music does not outshine the picture, just as the good accompanist will see that his playing does not drown out the star."

Few pictures have presented a bigger problem in orchestration than "Everywoman," because of the variety of phases. In a huge room, with a seven-foot screen at one end, a table big enough for twelve at the other, a piano at the side, and shooting through two deep holes in the rear, a projection machine, a group of men spent many hours working out the suitable accompaniment. Josiah Zuro, former conductor of the Manhattan Opera, and Joe La Rone were there, along with the others already mentioned. On the table lay huge volumes of classified music—waltzes, Strauss waltzes, old waltzes, popular waltzes, concert waltzes and slow waltzes.

There were huge volumes labeled "Mysterioso," "Pathetic," "Oriental," "Mysterious Andantes," "Love Themes," "Neutro," "Battle Music" and so on, covering about 5,500 complete orchestrations and thousands of other pieces of music.

"Somebody's Courtin' Somebody," and the title, showing in a beautiful grove a boy and girl sitting on a bench. The lighting was stunning—the whole thing, occupying only a few seconds, looked real. Emanuel Baer, at the piano struck up a tune.

It was a love scene, rich and beautiful. "You will bury the picture," said the impresario. "Things can be too beautiful." He turned to Victor Wagner, "Massenet's 'Werther,' I think you know the part I mean." Wagner brought it, marked. Baer played it while the projection man ran the scene over.

Came the scene where Wealth appears and has his inning. A debate ensued. Concert marches galore were considered. Riesenfeld, Paley and Wagner, all storehouses of musical literature, suggested and suggested. Baer played them, but nothing won a unanimous verdict. Other dignified and imposing numbers were brought on. Everything sounded too rich, even for Wealth. A masterpiece from "Faust" Hoffman" at last won, because, while it indicated vastness and power, two qualities of wealth, it also suggested pompousness and vanity. Wealth's foster brothers. And so the "scoring" of the picture went on.

"The Evil Eye" is announced by Frank Hall as the title for the Benny Leonard serial which will be started as soon as he finishes with Johnny Burdette in "Haven on the 16th." "The Evil Eye" is a story by Roy McCardell.

Alice Lake's next Metro screen classic will be "The Last Days of Pompeii," which will be produced under the supervision of Maxwell Karger.

The Famous Players-Lasky people have purchased the motion picture rights to "For the Defense," Elmer L. Rice's melodrama in which Richard Bennett is appearing at the Playhouse.

Following the release of "The Eternal Mother," Florence Reed, the United Picture star, will be presented in "The Alibi," written by Florence Dean.

Max Linder is in this country to make a series of comedies.

Alice Brady's next Reelart picture will be filmed in Philadelphia during a

Shadows on the Screen

Herbert Rawlinson, who has just completed his series of Chief Flynn stories, has been engaged as the star of a forthcoming special production to be made under the supervision of J. Stuart Blackton. The picture will be an adaptation of "Passers-by," in which Richard Bennett was featured.

Mabel Normand has returned to the West and will begin work in "The Girl with the Jazz Heart," Victor Schertz-

six-weeks engagement of "Forever After."

A plan for the introduction into schools of systematic series of instructional films as supplements to standard textbooks is being developed by the educational department of the Universal Film Company in cooperation with D. Appleton and Company, schoolbook publishers.

Bull Montana, so well known to the screen through his association with Douglas Fairbanks, is going on the stage. He is to do a monologue and Doug is coaching him. He will be booked as just plain "Bull."

Louise Winters, writer for "The Smart Set," is now engaged in special work for Selznick.

Dorothy Davenport, who is Mrs. Wallie Reid, will return to the screen in a film version of Robert Chambers' novel "The Fighting Chance." Charles Maigne is directing the picture. The cast is headed by Conrad Nagel.

"The Charming Mrs. Chase," first of a series of Mrs. Sidney Drew's screen adaptations, is based upon Julian Street's "After Thirty." John Cumberland is the star of the series.

Matt Moore has just arrived in California, where he has signed a contract with Marshall Neilan to star in "The River's End."

René Adorée, leading woman in Premier Clement's new picture, "The Strongest," has been signed to appear in another Fox special.

What is said to be the highest and most competent cast ever assembled for a Mary Miles Minter picture will be seen in "Judy of Rogue's Harbor," adapted from the book by Grace Miller White.

Myron Selznick has engaged Catherine Perry, one of the beauties of the present Ziegfeld show, for his second production "Plans of Man."

Vivian Rich, formerly leading woman for William Farnum, has been signed to play opposite Buck Jones in William Fox's presentation of "The Last Straw."

Anna Q. Nilsson will play the leading female rôle in "The Fighting Chance," a Paramount-Artist special to be directed by Charles Maigne. Conrad Nagel will play the lead.

"The Wayfarer," a film allegory based on the ancient fable, is now being staged at Madison Square Garden, forms a portion of "The World at Columbus," the six-reel record of the Methodist centenary convention held recently at Columbus, Ohio. The picture is the first attempt of any picture to demonstrate its growth and operation by official use of the screen.

In a letter to Albert Capellani, Adolphe Osso announces that he has installed in his Paris office, in Rue St. Honoré, the largest projection room in the city. It will be placed at the disposal of all Americans who go to Paris to show and sell their films. Mr. Osso will return to New York shortly, bringing with him two French films, "The Little Café," starring Max Linder, and "The Little Red Devil," with Gaby Deslys.

William Siström, who recently resigned from the management of Universal City, has signed a contract with the International Film Company as production manager.

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NEW YORK'S LEADING THEATRES AND SUCCESSES

EMPIRE
4th MONTH!
CHARLES FROHMAN Presents
ETHEL BARRYMORE
IN HER GREATEST TRIUMPH
"Déclassée"
BY ZOE AKINS
"A GORGEOUS PERFORMANCE."—Tribune